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ON MODERATION

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SOME
THOUGHTS ON MODERATION

BY
AXEL GUSTAFSON

AUTHOR OF "THE FOUNDATION OF DEATH: A STUDY OF
THE DRINK QUESTION"

*ENLARGED FROM A PAPER READ AT THE REEVE MISSION
ROOM, MANCHESTER SQUARE, JUNE 8, 1885*

(SAMUEL MORLEY, ESQ., M.P., IN THE CHAIR)

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SOME THOUGHTS ON MODERATION.

IF I say that drunkenness is an evil, loathsome as a habit, terrible as a disease ; and if I say that the drinking habit exerts to-day in England a destroying power over moral, social, religious, and political well-being, not matched by all other known evils combined—certainly not by that of any other one evil—you will not contradict me. You will admit that all this is so true, and so well known to be true, and has been so often and well said, that you rather wonder I should trouble to repeat it.

But if a thing like this is true, it has *not* been made sufficiently well known, it has *not* been asserted often enough, nor constantly enough, nor forcibly enough—no, not even though every living man, woman, and child had heard it—so long as attention and action still need rousing concerning it.

That attention and action *have* been roused is witnessed in the widespread and the earnest labours

of temperance societies, organizations, and Bands of Hope all over this country, and in the devotion by single individuals here and there, of their wealth, personal influence, and of their abilities to this reform. Much good has been and is being done in these and kindred ways ; but the *full* harvest of such labours, in the sense of broadly established permanent results, has not been reaped, and it is to the finding out the cause of this that our attention and action must be freshly roused.

The Drink-Evil is rooted in and nursed by prejudices and habits so strong by hereditary transmission and by continuing practice, that it is intrenched in that popular tolerance and tacit acceptance which is the most powerful of all supports, because of its tremendous passive resistance to change—leading us to go on enduring what we have always borne, by preventing us from ever vividly conceiving of what it would be like to be free.

Therefore, in spite of the manifold and faithful work of temperance reform, we see everywhere and at every turn the Public-House drawing in, by day and night, the husbands, fathers, and sons ; the wives, mothers, and babies of this great people ; and turning them out with that active curse in their veins which will bring them back again into the vicious circle, and others with them—day after day, month after month, and year after year, until we are threatened with this calamity, that no drop of untainted blood,

no true heart, no clean purpose, no logical brain, shall be left among us. And thinking people have come to recognize that the drink-evil, in spite of all that has thus far been done to check it, is the first, nearest, and biggest of the dangers which England must face and conquer, if she would escape collapse as a nation, and extinction as a God-loving and God-serving people.

They have already become convinced that, though there are many other vitally important questions calling for reform ; many moral, sanitary, and political problems pressing urgently for solution—such as that of enormous idle wealth on the one hand, and desperate anxious labour, poverty, and struggle, on the other ; the problems of the social vice, of the opium trade, the dietary, vaccination, and vivisection controversies ; the Irish question, the unemployed, the expensive and disastrous muddle of foreign policies, etc. ;—they have become convinced that none of these can be *properly understood or coped with* except by a *sober* people, a people with clear brains and active consciences ; and that the drink problem becomes thus *not* of choice, but of *practical imperative necessity*, the foremost. And thinking people are beginning to see that something must be wrong somewhere in the ranks of temperance reform itself.

We know that alcohol is a poison to body and soul ; we know that the liquor-traffic is worse than

any slave-trade which we have thought it right to put down by force of arms—for it is a trade in the *souls* as well as the bodies of the people; we know that *every vice sprouts with deadly luxuriance from, and in association with, the drinking habit*. But there is a thing which we do *not* yet know, and that is how to successfully combat this evil; for if we *did* know, we should not find that at every turn and everywhere we closed with the drink-evil it grappled us with unsapped strength; and we should understand, too, that where *we seem* to have overcome it, it has oftener been that it has *pretended* to recede in order to re-take a more certain hold.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that no good has been or is being done—particularly I would emphasize the good work going on among the young—but I *do* mean that this evil as a whole *holds its own with us*, and that the temperance reform movement has only *entered* the arena: it has not slain or driven out any of the wild animals of drink, and those it has succeeded in wounding are being skillfully tended and fed, and some of this tendance and some of this food is bestowed, unconsciously, from within the temperance ranks. And I mean to say that if we can find out what is wrong with us, and if, having found it out, we will join hands, hearts, and wills in tearing out our own errors—root, branch, and seed—*then* we shall win.

God Himself promises complete victory to *this*

kind of labour in any field. He does not promise that we shall find it easy, or that it shall lack of terrible sacrifice ; but He assures the victory.

What I want to try to do in this little talk with you, is to see if we cannot get the clue to what is wrong with us—what it is that we do, or fail to do, which keeps victory away.

In all other questions of great moral import, the civilized world, whatever its practice, *teaches abstinence* from evil. For instance, no one would claim for gambling that it is right, if one only gambles with moderation ; it would quickly be seen to be very inconsequent advice, even were it not immoral. For he who gambles at all, places himself in the direct line of influences peculiarly destructive of mental poise, judgment, and self-respect. Money that is won or lost at play is got or lost by essential dishonesty. Neither what is won or lost *represents anything really done* in the world. The man who loses must feel robbed, and the man who wins must feel a thief—until the process has been repeated often enough to quench all scruples.

There can be no moderation here—no staying at a given point ; it is penitent retreat toward honesty and self-respect, or it is a down grade of ever increasing velocity. No one would think of teaching that it is right to steal, if we only will be content to steal *moderately*. It is true that stealing could—and often does—begin with such caution and modera-

tion, that its victim would not detect the theft or be aware of loss ; but the *thief* would suffer moral decline, and then his moderation would expand and become excess.

Although society both practises and condones much lying, yet few if any would be found to seriously and directly teach that it is right to lie, if one will only do it moderately. No one would teach that it is right to be licentious, if we will only be so with moderation. Of these and of every known vice, whatever our practice, we clearly understand that *abstinence* is the *only* safety, the *only* honesty ; that moderation is an hypocrisy, and must generally lead by a more or less rapid plunge into excess.

Even in the matter of loyalty to party, any one who advocated or practised half services and convenient fidelity would be avoided or drummed out as worthless. Thus even in political questions we demand moral certitude and a clean record—*abstinence* from all heresy or dubiety.

But when we come to the Drink Question, our conscience, our reasoning powers, the whole mental acumen and spiritual stamina desert us. *Here* we say, *not* as we say in other cases, that the *thing itself* is an evil ; from first to last, in any grade or degree, its quality and potentiality are essentially for evil. We say instead of this, that it is an evil to drink to excess ; it is proper and good to drink with moderation.

Moderation, then, is proposed as the cure and conqueror of the drink-evil. But let us not fall into the mistake of supposing, as some do, that this remedy is a new one. On the contrary, it is as old as the drink-evil itself.

From the very earliest beginnings of this vice up to the present moment there has always been some one to say to the drinker, "*Don't* take too much!" Moderation has been preached to him by somebody, and urged upon him with all the arguments of decency, morality, expediency, that could *now* be brought forward—in each age, of course, according to the intelligence of that age, and according to special knowledge of the virtues, weaknesses, and needs of the one warned.

We know that from the moment that the drinking habit was found to involve danger to the State, the State itself interfered, and edicts and laws of all kinds and degrees, even to that of the death penalty, were put in force to establish moderation. And with what effect?

What have been the results of all the elaborate licensing systems in the various states of the civilized world? What is the result of the attempt to enforce moderation by means of the licensing system in England to-day?

That, according to Dr. Norman Kerr's computations, some 60,000 die annually from drink; and the Harveian Medical Society, claims that 14 per cent.

of the total mortality among adults is due to alcohol—that is, 71,500 individuals annually, or between 198 and 199 per day, die in these isles from intemperance. Again, we know that from the moment *society* began to regard so-called excess in drinking as a degradation, moderation societies have been formed, appealing to every sacred feeling and motive for sobriety on the one hand, and on the other, threatening excess with all sorts of social penalties. Yet all these, whatever they have seemed to accomplish, have failed. They were all founded on a false basis.*

And still, with all this failure witnessing to the inefficacy of this method, the great bulk of the temperance reform body preach and practise what

* In a paper on “The Temperance Cause and its Departures” (*Quarterly Journal of Inebriety*, Jan., 1883), Dr. Joseph Parrish says:—“Half a century ago the evils of excess in alcoholic beverages were as apparent as they are now. . . . Special thought being directed to the subject by a few philanthropic persons, public opinion caught inspiration, and demanded moderation. . . . Experience, however, soon demonstrated that the most reasonable hopes of these reformers were doomed to disappointment in the pursuit of such a course. They soon found, as they thought, that moderation led to excess, and that the ranks of the actually intemperate were drawn from the multitudes who indulged moderately, and hence a new move was instituted by which the stronger liquors known as distilled spirits should be abandoned, and only the more mild forms of drink, as beer, cider, and wine, be permitted. Hence the discrimination between the two classes of beverage. Here, again, was cause for disaffection among the elder temperance men, who had never abused malt liquors, but believed them to be useful. They could not, however, withstand the force of the progressive current, and were obliged either to abandon their cups or retire from the field, inasmuch as the inevitable total abstinence doctrine was destined to be the next in the order of adoption.”

they call moderation while trying to prevent and remedy inebriety.

Let us see what the terms "abstinence" and "moderation" signify. What *abstinence* means is known and understood by all. What *moderation* means no one can tell, for no three persons are agreed about it, nor, in the very nature of things, can they be. This *alone* ought sufficiently to show its impracticability for *general* application. To give only the attempts at authoritative definitions of this term would fill a large volume. Something must be wrong with a word that needs so much defining.

In the first place, not one set of digestive organs, not one brain or nervous system of any one of us, is exactly like those of any other; and even the most nearly alike have subtle differences which may lead, under treatment and conditions *exactly* similar, to *widely* differing results. This is the first, the fundamental difficulty, and one which must for ever remain an insuperable hindrance in the way of giving a general definition of moderation or of making any definition generally applicable. Another difficulty—also in itself sufficient to condemn the term moderation in connection with drink—is that alcoholic liquors always vary, both as to the *quantity* and *quality* of alcohol in them. Not only do we common folk find the definition of moderation too much for us, but doctors disagree—even those doctors who desire to define that they may prescribe it. In his

“Practice of Medicine,” Dr. Aitkin says:—“A pint of beer (20 ounces) may contain *one*, or *two*, or *more* ounces of absolute alcohol, or *less than a quarter of an ounce* ! This alcohol may be associated in the beer with an amount of *free acid* varying from fifteen to fifty grains, and with an amount of *sugar* varying from half an ounce to *three or four times* that *quantity*. A glass of sherry (2 ounces) may contain from one quarter of an ounce to half an ounce or more of absolute alcohol, with sugar varying in quantity.”

Dr. Lauder Brunton says:—“It is impossible to lay down a rule for the quantity necessary, for this will vary, not only with every individual, but with the same individual at different times.”

Dr. Garrod says:—“It is a matter of no little difficulty to define what is meant by a moderate quantity, and experience shows that this differs much in different individuals, and in the same individual under different circumstances.”

Dr. C. B. Radcliffe says:—“What moderation is you must find out for yourself, and all that I can do to help you in the discovery is to say that you are no longer moderate if what you have taken excites you or stultifies you, or has any other effect upon you beyond that of balancing, calming, comforting you.”

In an editorial, August 20, 1884, in defence of the notorious article on “Alcoholic Drinks” it had published on the 14th of the same month, the *Times* *

* See Appendix.

said :—"It is a common charge of the total abstainers that the phrase "moderation" is vague and cannot be defined. The answer is that no sensible person wishes to define it in general terms. It must be relative to the individual. It means what is perfectly consistent with health and with that scale of diet which experience shows to be most productive of a healthy state of body and mind."

Having thus pointed out that it must be *left* to the *individual*, the *Times* adds :—"It is [*not every one who can limit his alcohol at all times to the exactly right quantity.*"]"

Theoretically some of the so-called moderationists affirm that *four* fluid ounces of alcohol daily is the maximum safe dose. Moderate moderationists teach that this would be excess, and that *three* ounces would be about right. Strict moderationists, headed by such scientific men as Dr. Parkes and Dr. Anstie, hold *two* fluid ounces to be the maximum safe dose in health.

And yet when Dr. Anstie made a scientific experiment upon himself, by taking one and a half ounces of whiskey—equal to about three-quarters of an ounce of alcohol—a dose he supposed would be too small to produce poisonous results, he says :—"The poisonous effects were fully developed ; . . . the face felt hot and was visibly flushed, pulse 82, full and bounding, perspiration on the brow." And in his "Stimulants and Narcotics" Dr. Anstie also says :

—“A general review of alcohol-narcosis enables us to come to one distinct conclusion, the importance of which appears to be very great. Namely, that (as in the case of chloroform and ether) the symptoms which are commonly described as evidences of excitement, depending on the stimulation of the nervous system preliminary to the occurrence of narcosis, are in reality an essential part of the narcotic—that is, the paralytic phenomena.”

But that even three-quarters of an ounce of alcohol is not the minimum poisonous dose has been proven by the results of other scientific experiments.

Drs. Nicol and Mossop, of Edinburgh, by scientifically examining the condition of each other's eyes, after taking small doses of poisonous substances, found, as regards alcohol, that after a dose of two drachms of rectified spirits—*less than a quarter of an ounce* of absolute alcohol—“paralysis was produced in the nerves controlling the delicate blood-vessels of the retina,” which indicated a corresponding effect on the brain.

Dr. Ridge, assisted by several physicians, experimenting also with only two drachms of alcohol, found that the senses of feeling and vision were injured; and recently, Dr. Scougal, of New Mill, making similar experiments, confirmed these conclusions, and added that the hearing was similarly affected.

When it is remembered that in ordinary liquors two drachms of alcohol “represent a tablespoonful of

spirits such as brandy or whiskey, not quite half a wine-glass full of port or sherry, a small wine-glass full of claret or champagne, and not quite a quarter pint of ale"—it is more clearly seen that any one who drinks alcoholic liquors at all *must* be, scientifically speaking, drinking to excess, because very few, if any, so-called moderate drinkers restrict themselves to such small doses.

Dr. W. A. Hammond says :—"A single glass of wine may be excess in some individuals."

Dr. Brudenel Carter says that he cannot take more than "half a wine-glass full of whiskey, largely diluted, or half a tumbler of light wine with luncheon and dinner. More than this is apt to produce discomfort, and if taken late in the day is often followed by a restless night."

As I said, instances of the indefinability of the term moderation, and consequently of its impossibility in general practice, could be multiplied to a big volume. The word has no meaning from any scientific or common-sense standpoint of the drink question.

The nature of alcohol, as of all known narcotic substances, is to dull the sensibility of the nervous tissue ; and as the agreeable effect experienced by the drinker is found to consist in the molecular movements of the nerve-fibre, in its efforts to throw off and minimize the dulling effects of the narcotic ; and as by repetition of the dose less and less of *fresh* nervous tissue remains to be thus affected, and the nervous

tissue as a whole must become less sensitive under the narcotic influence—it follows that the moderate drinker, if consistent that is, if rigorously adhering to a defined quantity, will soon perceive none of the pleasurable effect just explained. Thus, since the action of alcohol is to steadily diminish the very effects for which it is taken, so that an increase of dose is necessitated if any of the original effect is to be reproduced, we see that moderation inevitably destroys moderation.

Great value is attached to the results of scientific experiments made with alcohol for the purpose of ascertaining how much or how little may be taken with safety to the taker, but *nothing that is at once definite and universally or even generally applicable as to the taking of alcohol has yet been proven by these experiments, except the soundness of the principle of abstinence.* Meanwhile one fact of superlative importance gets comparatively overlooked. I mean the fact that, whatever the differences between doctors and scientific men as to the smallest minimum poisonous dose or the largest maximum safe dose, *all their differences lie within a certain small circle at whose circumference they do meet and are agreed,* that even by the broadest estimate among them but very little alcohol is safe or even presumably beneficial. And with this on the one hand, and as it were within one hand, we have, on the other, the great realm of the nameless and indescribable totality of drunken-

ness, degradation, and misery. And since the use of alcohol is such a physiological problem even to scientific men, and since the consequences involved in its use are so tremendous as we know them to be, and as Dr. Moxon points out in these impressive words, "*Alcohol affects the whole man, his whole self, all he can do or say, and not only so, but all that his bodily nature does in secret with him*"—surely the disagreement among accepted authorities cannot be held to warrant its use, but rather to impose the highest obligation to avoid it altogether.

Again, it is claimed that there is abundant evidence tending to prove that drinking, even to excess—certainly moderate drinking, *i.e.* drinking without positive drunkenness—is harmless, because almost everywhere can be pointed out hale, vigorous-looking, and active citizens who do thus drink. But this, like most arguments, is based on essential ignorance of the meaning of health, usefulness, and true living.

We know that health such as we were intended to enjoy and use is practically not possessed by any one. Health implies in man the harmonious enjoyment of life by both soul and body; and *usefulness* means that *all our gifts and powers are having their widest and most faithful development and employment*. To this end we may be certain that it is of the first moment *to guard the various forces of life*, instead of *experimenting upon and with them* to see how far we can strain or expend them without endangering

their capital ; and we may be certain that anything taken into the system, *which, while making use of its life processes, does not supply something it needs, is taking something away from both health and capacity,* and cannot therefore be conscientiously used.

The term moderation is also without place in the ethics of drink. Morally, as physiologically, it is an evil plea, and the attempt to make it into a principle of action against the drink-evil is a snare of the first magnitude ; and the physical and ethical elements of the question are interwoven, as sincere physicians and good men of unpoisoned minds know.

In his "Temperance Reformation and the Christian Church," the Rev. James Smith, M.A., says :—
"There is a close analogy between the action of alcohol on the mental and moral nature and its action on the physical system. It is unnecessary and injurious alike to the one and to the other ; it deranges the healthy action of the mental powers as well as of the bodily functions. As it weakens the power of resisting disease, so also it weakens the power to resist temptation ; as it pollutes the blood and poisons the brain, so also it brutalizes the mind and sears the conscience ; if at times it induces an appearance of bodily health which is but seeming and deceptive, it also puts on a plausible show of brotherly kindness, generosity, charity, and religion, which are equally fictitious and spurious ; it is a mother of sins as well as of diseases ; it ministers to mental and moral as

well as to physical corruption, debility, and decay, and is a 'poison of the soul' as well as of the body."

In his recent address on "Doctors and Drink," Dr. Alfred Carpenter says :—"The man who preaches the doctrine of moderation as the right principle to be adopted, is either unaware of the dangers which beset the human frame, and corresponds to the blind leading the blind, or he is wilfully leading his weaker brethren astray upon a broad but dangerous path. It may be pleasanter, more agreeable, it may be pecuniarily profitable ; *but it is not right.*"

Speaking of the reasonings by which many seek to justify themselves in the practice of moderation, Dr. Richardson says :—"All these suppressions of the true and suggestions of the false are the fruits of so-called moderation, of undefined and undefinable and impossible moderation. All are the voices of a human constitution speaking, not the free thoughts of humankind, but thoughts provoked by the agent that is defended, and resting so exclusively upon that agent that if *it* did not exist they never could be conceived, and therefore never expressed." And the American Dr. Palmer, in his recent treatise on "The Science and Practice of Medicine," says :—"A desire for alcoholic drinks, whatever the constitutional or hereditary predisposition, does not appear in those who have never used them ; but sometimes almost *first* indulgence begets the desire. With others only a protracted use will produce this desire ; and with

others still, after considerable indulgence the desire is not great. While some *readily* contract a strong and uncontrollable habit, others keep control of themselves in regard to this indulgence, and *may* drink 'moderately' for a long time *without* exceeding certain bounds. Most men in their earlier indulgence think themselves capable of this control, and indulge without apprehension of danger; and when that danger is *apparent to others*, it *may not be to them*, until the desire and the habit are too strong, the *will* too *weak*, or the *indifference to consequences* too great, for any effectual efforts to change their course. The longer the indulgence, the stronger the habit, the feebler the resistance, and the greater the indifference, until the victim is swallowed up in his self-invited destruction. From this view of the facts, it becomes too obvious to need repeating that the remedy for drunkenness as a vice, and inebriety as a disease, is abstinence from all alcoholic drinks."

The *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* (1834), in an article on temperance societies, says:—"The greatest discovery for which we are indebted to the philanthropists of America is that *temperate drinkers are the chief promoters of drunkenness*. Although the example of the drunkard is contaminating and injurious, yet he serves also as a beacon to *warn away* from the vortex where thousands have perished; while those who are unconsciously gliding toward the fatal circle point with confidence to the *moderate*

drinker. . . . Public admonitions against excess and private entreaties to moderation in the use of these dangerous liquors have been tried for centuries in vain. *Moderation has produced* appetite, and appetite excess, and the evil has been enormous."

In an old pamphlet, "The Scriptural Claims of Teetotalism," published in 1844, that veteran abstinence champion, the Rev. Newman Hall, says:—"Besides the 600,000 drunkards we should seek to reclaim, there are 30,000 others who are annually becoming such. They are at present advocates of *moderation*. But so were those who are now drunkards. Who sets out with the deliberate design of becoming a sot?

"Would not almost the whole of the 600,000 tell us, 'We began by resolving to enjoy ourselves by drinking *moderately*, as you do, but were afterwards insensibly led onward to excess'? Where, then, are we to find the 30,000, who, ere twelve months are fled, will be numbered with the inebriate hosts, but among the ranks of the 'moderationists'? Is the reader quite sure that he will not ere long have crossed the fatal border? Is he quite sure that his friend, his brother, his child, his partner in life, may not become a victim? How does he know that by his moderate indulgence he may not be now encouraging in the first step to ruin some who are most dear to him, and whom at present he regards as being incapable of excess? The host of 30,000 will be drafted from somewhere; why not from among ourselves?"

In his opening address to the National Temperance Congress, June 16, 1884, its president, the Right Rev. Frederick Temple, then Bishop of Exeter, and now of London, said :—"We find as a matter of fact that instead of total abstinence being unattainable and moderation the attainable, it is distinctly easier to get masses of men to pledge themselves to total abstinence. *It is moderation that we find to be unattainable.*"

We know that between holiness and sin—any sin—there is a fixed gulf which can neither be bridged nor filled up. We see at once that sin, however small a sin, *is* sin ; it is *not* holiness. Holiness is absolute : it is perfect ; no taint, no particle of sin whatsoever is in it, for the moment it has any flaw it is not holiness ! Now, we admit all this about sin ; but when we come to the drink question we place no-drinking or abstinence, and a little drinking or moderation, together as one body, upon one side ; upon the other we place drunkenness, with all its unspeakable wickedness and wretchedness ; whereas here the true division is between abstinence and the least indulgence, precisely as it is between holiness and the least sin.

Can we not have the honesty and the courage to see this truth in its application to this drink question ?

There *is* a radical distinction between the man who abstains and the man who drinks *any*, however little—a distinction in himself, in his influence, in his future, and a distinction of enormous importance to posterity. The man who abstains will never be a

drunkard ; will never, by his example, tempt others to drink ; will never, so far as his own responsibility goes, transmit the alcoholic curse. The man who drinks at *all*, be it ever so moderately, has put himself in the chain of circumstances and influences which *always* may, which very often do, lead to the drunkard's debased life and dishonoured grave. He is never certainly safe from the danger of coming under the mastery of alcohol ; he is a snare to others ; he will almost surely transmit to his children or their children this curse mysteriously increased in force.

All abstainers are on one platform, the *only* platform on which the drink-evil has no chance. All drinkers, those who drink ever so little or infrequently and those who drink from morning till night, are all together on another platform, the one only platform where the drink-evil has a *sure* footing.

Let us look in the face the fact that *it is moderation* which *has* kept, which *is* keeping, and which, if we let it, *will* keep us under the *curse* of drink, and that we shall get rid of it only by *refusing*, with *resolution*, and *constancy*, *all compromise with it*. "The complete triumph of the cause will not be secured until abstinence becomes universal, the drinking usages be totally abolished, all temptations be removed, and the bulwarks which serve as the defences of alcohol be overthrown." *

* Rev. James Smith, M.A., in "The Temperance Reformation and the Christian Church," 1875.

Efforts to make the principle of moderation, or temporizing with the drink-evil, act in harmony with the principle of abstinence, or rejection of this evil root and branch, *must* fail. In any attempt at a *working association* of these two principles, abstinence will not hurt moderation, but *moderation will hurt abstinence!* It will be the thin end of the wedge riving the goodly tree asunder, or as the innocent-looking wooden horse of the Greeks so fatally admitted within the walls of Troy.

Vice can always afford to associate with virtue, but virtue cannot afford it. Self-indulgence can always afford the good-fellowship of self-restraint, but self-restraint cannot afford it. A whole pailful of water may not suffice to cleanse away a single drop of ink, but the single drop of ink will assuredly suffice to discolour the whole pailful of water.

When I said in the beginning that we did not yet know how to combat this evil, I meant that we have not known that *moderation*, and *not* inebriety, is the point of attack. Brewers and liquor-sellers know it, and know how to rally around it.

That this is true was strikingly exemplified a little while ago in the United States, where, owing chiefly to the influential efforts of the Rev. Dr. Howard Crosby, Chancellor of the University of New York, a powerful moderation society was formed five years ago.

In his sermons and addresses on moderation, Dr.

Crosby, besides calling upon the individual and society to both preach and practice moderation, inveighed heavily against the present conduct of the liquor-traffic, and demanded great reduction in the number of public-houses, the strictest control over those allowed to remain both as to the number of hours they should be open, the conduct of customers while in licensed precincts—"that the sellers should be under heavy bonds not to sell to minors or drunkards;" that "the law should likewise make the collection of evidence against a licensed seller easy, and the penalty for breaking the law should be imprisonment as well as fine."

Notwithstanding these strictures on it, the liquor-trade found Dr. Crosby's advocacy so valuable to their interests, that the "Brewers' Association, the most wealthy and powerful foe of the temperance cause in America," printed and scattered one of his sermons all over the country as a campaign document. And the Rev. Dr. Kynett, delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States to the first Ecumenical Methodist Conference in London in the fall of 1881, said, as to the effects of Dr. Crosby's moderation advocacy, "We as temperance men would rather meet the combined forces of the brewers' and liquor-dealers' associations than the influence created by that one moderation minister."

If it is asked why the liquor-trade should feel

interested in spreading as a campaign document an address in favour of moderation, and containing such strictures and demands, the answer is easy.

The drunkard is the terror of the publican.

1. Because he is disreputable ; he is like a placard, conspicuously, offensively, and persistently affirming "*See what the public-house brings a man to !*"

2. Because the misery, neglect, and poverty of utter sottishness, and the bestialities and crimes of drunken frenzy, alike cry out, loud-tongued, "*We come from the public-house !*"

3. Because the drunkard, being in an irresponsible condition, may at any time create a brawl requiring police intervention, and thereby endanger the publican's licence.

4. Because the *respectable* "moderation" customers, those upon whom the publican relies for strength to resist with some show of reason the deep-hearted tide of total abstinence—because these may be turned away either by the eloquent warning of the drunkard's condition or because they do not care to mix in such company.

Indeed, the brewer and publican have learned that by the drunkard they fall, but by the moderate drinker they stand their ground.

Dr. Crosby's plan would help to make the trade and licensed precincts respectable, and by thus destroying one of the great claims urged for its discontinuance, would weaken the force of the other

evidence which could be brought against it, and so strengthen its hold on the community. Add the shield of respectability to the power of precedent, the force of habit and appetite, and the money interest all invested in this traffic, and we see why it rallies around the moderation standard.

I affirm, then, that the doctrine and practice of what is meant by the term moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages, is the *source, the core, and the sure perpetuation of the drink curse*; that, however much of respectability, sincerity, personal virtue, and good conduct, however much devoted labour against the drink-evil may, and do, undoubtedly exist among and spring from the ranks of the great moderationist body of the temperance movement, it is not the less true, absolutely and unchangeably true, that this doctrine and practice is the one impregnable stronghold of this evil. And it was with this truth swelling in my heart that I said our labours would not be easy nor lack of great sacrifice, but that God would give the victory to the work for which this truth calls.

I know that among moderationists are thousands of good men and women, many of splendid positions, abilities, and distinctions, in Church, State, and society, and that they wish and strive for the good results which abstainers work for; and yet I cannot choose but denounce the doctrine and practice of alcoholic moderation as the most pernicious mistake, even were

it only and solely because, "wherever the custom of moderate drinking has been sanctioned by a community, there has always been, and must always be, a very large number in that community to sink from moderation to excess, and no man can guiltlessly indulge in that which, not being a necessity for himself, is, by his indulging, a snare to his brother." *

The Bands of Hope which are increasing all over the country represent the most unselfish and most important work of temperance reform, since it is a work less for ourselves than for those who come after us ; for if the children are saved, the future is saved.

But if the organizers, leaders, and teachers of these children teach abstinence, while themselves practising "moderation," what is it that the children are really being taught ?

In the school where I went as a little boy there was a rule that only in the two highest classes would smoking be permitted. I can well remember how we little fellows looked forward to the time when *we* could give this evidence of maturity and manly character, and many of our number secretly anticipated the date. True, we were taught *verbally* that it was a bad habit, and that tobacco hindered the best growth of the body. But in the meantime what we *saw* and *felt* was this fact, that our elders and superiors, those whom we believed to be the best and wisest of human beings, smoked their cigars and

* "The Foundation of Death."

pipes with every appearance of pleasure, and did not seem to us to be hurt by it; and this teaching effectively counteracted the other.

What he *sees* is more to the child than anything that is *said* to him; and if what is said to him is not acted upon by the sayer, neither will the child act upon it—*i.e.* though he may, by being brought under special influences, act upon it for a time, he will not act upon it from conviction, which is the only basis for continued right action. Children are the most penetrating moral detectives, and leaving exceptional cases out of the question, they will not, in any great number, grow up into total abstaining men and women if they *have been taught total abstinence by those who practice "moderate" drinking*. Worse still, by seeing *good men and good women teaching one thing and doing another*, the children will lose their first heaven-given endowment of moral insight, and will learn to believe not only that teaching may take the place of example in the matter of alcohol, but that profession in general will do in the place of fulfilment.

Those who, in spite of such errors of education, grow later into a clear sense of what is right, must then set to work to dig up their bad habit by the roots with much pain and labour and many falls by the way, and perhaps failure at the last.

All these things constitute part of the heavy responsibility of those who are forming and teaching the Bands of Hope.

Moderation, then, being the real strength of the enemy, how is it that it has so nearly come to be our watchword against that enemy? We can understand how wicked men adopt and act on a false principle; but how is it that so many earnest men and women who lament the ruin done by drink, and preach and pray and labour to prevent that ruin—how is it that they can be blind to the inherent falseness and danger of the moderation doctrine? How is it that they can fail to see, knowing as they all must the proven peculiar and subtle power of alcohol to steal into the centres of life and gain absolute sway over body and soul—how is it possible that, knowing this, they can fail to see that there is no such thing as the *least safe* dalliance with alcohol, any more than there is the least safe dalliance with the plague? * A little trifling with cholera or yellow fever means *danger* of disgusting disease and death. A little temporizing with alcohol means, in the great majority of cases, the *danger* of the diseases and death of the drunkard. In the case of the plague the victim is removed lest others be injured, and, so far as he is concerned, the disease dies with him. In the case of inebriety, all who love the victim suffer acutely for his sin, many persons are tainted by

* “We might as well talk of the prudent use of the plague, of fire handled prudently around among gunpowder, of poison taken prudently, or of vipers and serpents introduced prudently into our homes to glide along as a matter of courtesy to our visitors and of amusement to our children.”—REV. LYMAN BEECHER.

association, and his infection does not die with him, but an unborn generation must find it in their veins.

If it were a peculiarity of pestilence, that just within the outer limits of the infected precincts there was always present a certain pleasure, or agreeable excitement, or soothing influence, or a subtle sweet aroma in the air ; and if it had been shown that some people could venture into this locality and remain or retire from it at will, without apparently incurring risk ; if it was also certain that, seeing this to be so, multitudes of people should attempt the same course, should find that this pleasure was part of an infection they could not resist, but must yield to until it drew them to their death in the very heart of the poisoned district—would any one be found to defend the conduct of the apparently unharmed few as innocent and right ? Would any one be found ready to affirm that it was by the teaching and practice of these exempted few that the legions already sunk in the vortex of the plague could be redeemed, and the yet uninfected be withheld from venturing in ?

What we really do with the plague-evil is to isolate the infected—to absolutely prevent, by the strictest measures, all communication between not only the uninfected and infected *districts*, but between the uninfected *persons* and those who, though still appearing to be well, have exposed themselves or been exposed to infection. The difference between our treatment of the pest-evil and the alcohol

evil is, that in the case of the latter we *think* we have found a bit of safe pleasure-ground—a narrow strip bordering a bottomless danger, we know; but let only those of steady nerve seek to pluck the flowers along the edge! But the weak of nerve, or the *unsuspecting inheritor* of weakness, like the look and perfume of those flowers as well, and when, having fallen into the dreadful dark, their cries and the cries of those who love them pierce our ears, we of the steady nerve answer back, “Come up, you foolish ones, and stay on the safe edge with us!” and even while we say this cruel, mocking thing, some of us slip and join them! *

“Let him that thinks he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Applying the foregoing illustration to the question of moderation, how can the really good be

* “I say boldly, that no man living who uses intoxicating drinks is free from the danger of at least occasional, and if occasional ultimately of habitual, excess. I have myself known such frightful instances of persons brought into captivity to the habit, that there seems to be no character, position, or circumstances that free men from the danger. I have known many young men of the finest promise led by the drinking habit into vice, ruin, and early death. . . . I have known ministers of religion, in and out of the Establishment, of high academic honours, of splendid eloquence, nay, of vast usefulness, whom it has fascinated and hurried over the precipice of public infamy, with their eyes open and gazing with horror on their fate. I have known men of the strongest and clearest intellect, and of vigorous resolution, whom it has made weaker than children and fools. . . . And of all the victims of intemperance, be it remembered, there is *not one* who did not begin by moderate drinking, or who had the remotest idea when he began that he should be led into excess.”—Mr. Edward Baines, in the Rev. James Smith’s “Temperance Reformation and the Christian Church.”

blinded? It seems to me that there are two chief causes of the false position in which the moderationist body of temperance reformers stand.

One is the *effect which a hereditary and a present practice of the use of alcohol have produced upon the race.*

The *other* is, that immense wealth, political interests, social influence and position, are at stake, and have massed themselves in one enormous complicated enginery of State, Church, society, and individual around the drink traffic. So clear, so unassailable is the logic as to whether the drinking-evil in any and all of its forms or grades, *is* an evil, that but for the public and private revenues of liquor, and but for a certain effect liquor has already produced upon the mental faculties of many persons, there would *be no* drink-question in the sense of a moral or religious controversy.

Of the *first* cause, that of alcoholic heredity and alcoholic habit upon the race, I wish to say that my studies into this question, which have been patient, thorough, and as wide as my resources have permitted—and shall, I hope, be very much wider yet—have shown me one fact of appalling meaning, and a fact which has not yet, as it seems to me, become generally known to those who are battling with the drink-evil, and yet which must be practically understood and deeply felt if we are to succeed.

I mean this fact—that alcoholic heredity and

alcoholic habit have vitiated the relations between *man and himself, and between man and man, down to the smallest details of daily living and association.*

It has done this—*first*, by diminishing the capacity for sustained high mental effort, and with it the capacity for being sensible of this loss of power in ourselves or others ; *secondly*, and consequently, by undermining, through nerve deterioration, the faculty of pure or applied logic, the power of ratiocination or discriminating thinking in any difficult direction or in any valuable degree ; *thirdly*, and again consequently, by undermining the power of the will and obscuring and stunting the higher spiritual faculties of developed love, patience, aspiration.

So that, instead of the actuation of these high powers intended to be the guides and regulators of human relations and activities, and to inspire and promote sustained unselfish labour for the good of each and all, there is a slothful acceptance of what *is*, or at most a fitful, misdirected, and unfruitful effort or series of efforts made again and again along the line of previous failure.

“Physiologists and psychologists now generally concur also in the opinion that the delicacy or coarseness of the tissue and construction of the brain-matter determine the quality of its respective functions ; and the fact that the more delicate the tissue the higher the function exercised by the brain-matter seems proven by alcohol itself in its effect on mind manifes-

tations—nerve-tissue, the finest of the bodily tissues, and the finest nerve-matter being, as just explained, peculiarly and pre-eminently the prey of alcohol—because the first principles to suffer confusion and paralysis from alcohol are the normal, moral, and spiritual; those of aspiration, faith, reverence, self-abnegation, love, modesty, patience, fortitude, and so on.

“The degree in which alcohol undermines volition is, of course, greatly determined by the mental quality and temperament of the drinker, the extent to which he carries the habit, and the nature of other habits formed in connection with it, etc. In some instances so-called moderate drinking has palpably as totally undermined the will, while in others excessive drinking has not overcome this power. It is also to be carefully remembered that the effect of alcohol on volition has innumerable disguises, many of them successfully deceiving alike the victim and the spectator.

“In some persons a once pure and virile volition—susceptible as volition should be to the at once enlightening and modifying influences of the aspirations and emotions of a sound and humane heart—is by the alcoholic habit gradually transmuted into a peculiar stubbornness, combined with an absence of emotion and indifference to the emotions of others. Such a person at first and at last will be spoken of as a man of iron will, and the transition from the

firmness of pure volition to the immobility of stolid selfishness if felt will not be understood, will be imagined to be an intensification of the will power.

“It is a condition in reference to volition not unlike that which sometimes occurs in the physical organism, when, after death, the form once bright with living energy, having been consigned to decay, is by some unseen process turned to stone.” *

Such results as these I have found upon ample evidence to be the work of the evil leaven of alcohol. I cannot, in this short lecture, show you how I have reached this conclusion. I hope to do so in a book by-and-by. But *now* I can only ask you to go on with me for my present purpose as if my conclusions had been proven to you.

I repeat that I have found this enfeebling of man's moral and intellectual powers, and the fatal dulling of his consciousness to the fact—this degeneration and depletion of his noblest faculties, and their gradual substitution by poor, spurious, meretricious imitations—to be the evil work of the slow leavening of alcohol, and particularly have I found evidence that these results are due, not so much to inebriety—which is often checked of such effectuation by impotence—as they are to moderation, *i.e.* to the daily use of alcohol in small quantities, in lives never classed as sensual or inebriate. From these conclusions it becomes at once apparent why we find

* From article on “Inebriety and Volition,” by Axel Gustafson.

in this enlightened time so many of the learned and the true-hearted combining to defeat a cause they professedly represent and sincerely wish to see succeed, by setting ajar that gate called "Moderate Drinking," and bidding the people to trust their steps to its slippery way ; a way which looks like a path and proves to be a precipice, and at the bottom of which lie the bones of every poor wretch who has died of drink. Through no other gate, and by no other way, has any one who was once untainted by drink ever passed as a drunkard from this world to the next.

And if some, feeling the crumbling beneath their feet, have the sense and the power to scramble back, is it the less a fact that to the great number these rescues do not and cannot come ?

And if some of us find and succeed in maintaining a foothold a little way down, and so escape *open* and QUICK destruction, what is it that we have accomplished ? Dr. Richardson would say to us :—" You are like a brave man sailing in a fine boat with a hole in the bottom. You can prove the courage of your seamanship by showing that all the while you are steering you can keep your eye and your thumb on that hole. The boatman who has a boat without a hole has, it is true, nothing of the kind to look after ; but see what a coward and fool he looks compared with one who can steer and sail and manage a leakage at the same time ! "

But this is not all that is done by our keeping that foothold a little way down. Scores and scores of the unwary, seeing our apparent safety are tempted to try and follow our example. What cowards and fools they look when lured by our seeming security they plunge headlong down out of the reach of help or hope, while we "steer and sail and manage a leakage all at the same time!" But like what shall *we* look when the vast phalanx of these victims, together with the yet larger multitude who inherited their fall unto the third and fourth generation, shall rise before us in that Universal Day, whose light no sophistry, no self-deception can withstand; when no rank, or station, or pomp, or power pertaining to the earthly career, will remain to any of us, who, if some portion of Truth's white garment be not flowing around us, shall stand verily naked indeed?

There are two other things which prevent many moderationists from seeing the true character and outcome of moderation. These are the bondage of appetite and the bondage of spiritual pride.

It is quite certain that if drinking had not some charm for the sense of taste, some pleasure in its effects, or some thrall due to these things, most people would instinctively abstain, needing no other incentive than the knowledge and the spectacle of the misery caused by drink.

Then there is the spiritual pride which recoils from the suggestion that it is not able to resist evil.

If a bishop or an archbishop says, "I am an abstainer, not because I cannot stop at the right point, for drink is no temptation to me, but I abstain because of the help it may be to others who cannot stop at the right point"—this is considered noble, and a thing to be proud of saying. But is there no pride in that distinction, "not because I need to, as it is no temptation to *me*"?

If a bishop or an archbishop says, "I abstain from this because, having a great bounty of all the refined pleasures and honours which go with my position, I can go without this *one* thing much more easily than those who have far less of pleasant things than I; I abstain also because by it many fall, and I *will not help* in *that* work, however much custom, habit, perversion of Scripture, and my own appetite may combine to support me. I abstain also because I am ignorant; if there be any quantity which will do me harm, I do not know what it is, no one can tell me what it is, and I cannot *safely* find out for myself, because the worst harm it can do me is that kind of harm of which I shall have no sign, until it is done! I abstain also because I am weak; for it is not in my power to know beforehand what test my strength can stand, and I will not turn into mockery that sacred petition framed for us, 'Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.'"

When a great teacher of men says such things as these, from the powerful vantage-ground of the pulpit,

I think he has spoken helping words, with the only pride that is noble—the pride whose essence is humility and tender human fellowship with the weakest.

But when a poor working man or working woman, whose life is all passed in the rough harness of the beast of burden, who has neither pleasures, nor rewards, nor incitements, only work and weariness and the grave! to whom drink in moderation means, as they honestly think, a little oil on the harness, a bit of grease for the wheels, and a bit of shade and rest by the way, when such as these say, “I will abstain because I know it is wrong to drink,” *then* we have heard the bravest thing of all.

I am aware that in what I have said I have flung the gauntlet down before the most popular, the most intrenched and powerful prejudices and convictions which surround this question. But I am constrained to say it because I *know* it is true—not true because *I* say it, but true with the truth taught in these deathless words: “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink because ye are Christ’s, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward. And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”

APPENDIX.



THE following extracts are from a very long and most pernicious article on "Alcoholic Drinks," which appeared in the *Times* for August 14, 1884:—

"If crimes must be committed, and at present there seems little reason to expect their entire cessation, it is perhaps better that those who commit them should be drunk than that they should be sober. A drunken criminal is more likely than a sober one to leave traces which may lead to his detection, and is also more likely to fail in his undertaking. A burglar armed with a revolver, after the modern fashion, would be a much less formidable person if he were under the influence of liquor. There is, of course, the chance that he might use his weapon more recklessly; but there is also the chance that he might betray himself by using it prematurely, and the certainty that he would be less likely than if sober to hit his mark. . . . An impartial observer is now able to walk abroad, and to compare the Teetotalers in the streets, in railway trains, and in omnibuses, with the great bulk of the presumably moderate-drinking population. The blue riband wearers present, of course, great varieties of character and of aspect; but, if we set aside exceptions, it would be difficult to deny that the "army" is composed, in the main, of persons of inferior physical development, and, if we may judge by their facial expression, of those who are not

remarkable for intellectual power. . . . Such a civilization as ours produces an abundant morbid undergrowth of feeble bodies and lop-sided minds, of persons who are easily led by their emotions or by what they fancy to be eloquence, and who are ready to give their adhesion, such as it is, to any fad which is pressed upon them with sufficient volubility and frequency. Their individual insignificance becomes less oppressive to them when they fancy themselves members of a "great" organization, and their vanity is gently titillated by the idea of setting an example of superior virtue to their neighbours. . . . Where there is neither hard physical labour, nor, in a still greater degree, where there is no continuous strain upon the intellect, the alcohol is not required as a source of power, and it becomes a surplus material which has to be eliminated from the system, and which even then acts as a poison. . . . In the enormous majority of healthy people, on the contrary, the experience of mankind shows that some form of alcohol is a food which is easily and without strain on the digestive organs converted into force, bearing to a supply of animal food somewhat the relation which such a supply itself bears to an equivalent quantity of nutritive substance in the form of vegetable matter. . . . The athlete, who not only exerts muscular force very energetically, but who requires to have a reserve of it, to sustain a "spurt" at a critical moment, and still more the brain-worker, cannot afford to devote even a large part of the total of his nerve-force to the mere work of digesting, and requires a diet which shall make the least possible demand upon him. Now, the advantage of alcohol to men of this class is that it gives a supply of force which is obtained by the mere absorption of liquid, without any demand upon the digestive organs at all ; so that a light and easily digested meal, supplemented by alcohol in proper quantity and in suitable form, is equivalent as a restorative to a much heavier meal without the alcohol, and is unattended by the disadvantage, inseparable from the latter, of consuming nerve-force in excessive quantity for his own assimilation. The reclamation of the half-million drinkers to excess, if half a million there be, must be attempted by other machinery than the commonplaces of Teetotalism, or the denial of the use of alcohol to those who have no temptation to abuse

it. . . . Many persons, especially delicate and fastidious children, may often be helped to take meat by sipping mouthfuls of claret or hock during the meal. . . . Many clergymen abstain 'for the sake of example' without pausing to consider whether the example may not in some cases be a bad one; and whether they would 'not discharge their manifest duties more efficiently by help of the added force which alcohol would give.' "At present we believe the teetotal societies do very little good and a great deal of harm."

The *Lancet*, in commenting on the *Times* article, says: "The world is not so much in danger of neglecting to take a proper amount of alcohol that it needs three or four columns of ingenious argument to prevent it falling a prey to indigestion and nervous exhaustion from drinking water alone."

And the *British Medical Journal*, apropos of alcohol and nerve-force, says: "So far from alcohol aiding in the execution of brain-work, or in the perfection of intellectual power, exactly the converse is true. The tendency of drink is to take the edge off the more refined senses, to dim perception, and to dull the higher faculties of the mind. To our thinking, the most indefensible teaching of the *Times* lies in the reference to the young. The recommendation of claret and hock to delicate and fastidious children is as little in accordance with scientific practice as it is with prudence and common sense."





